

## Office of Personnel Management

## §591.217

price of the item in a neighboring survey or COLA area.

### §591.215 Where does OPM collect prices in the COLA and DC areas?

(a) *Survey areas.* Each COLA area has one survey area, except Hawaii County, HI, and the U.S. Virgin Islands COLA areas. Hawaii County has two survey areas: the Hilo area and the Kailua Kona/Waimea area. The U.S. Virgin Islands also has two survey areas: the Island of St. Croix and the Islands of St. Thomas and St. John. The Washington, DC, area has three survey areas: the District of Columbia, the Maryland suburbs of the District of Columbia, and the Virginia suburbs of the District of Columbia. OPM collects non-housing data throughout the survey area, and for selected items such as golf, snow skiing, and air travel, OPM collects non-housing data in additional geographic locations. OPM may collect housing data throughout the survey area or in specific housing data collection areas. The following table shows the survey areas:

SURVEY AREAS	
COLA and reference areas	Survey areas and geographic coverage
Anchorage .....	City of Anchorage. <sup>1</sup>
Fairbanks .....	Fairbanks/North Pole area. <sup>1</sup>
Juneau .....	Juneau/Mendenhall/Douglas area. <sup>1</sup>
Rest of Alaska .....	See paragraph (c) of this section.
Honolulu .....	City and County of Honolulu.
Hawaii County .....	Hilo area. <sup>1</sup>
	Kailua Kona/Waimea area.
Kauai .....	Kauai Island.
Maui .....	Maui Island.
Guam & CNMI .....	Guam.
Puerto Rico .....	San Juan/Caguas area. <sup>2</sup>
U.S. Virgin Islands	St. Croix.
	St. Thomas/St. John area. <sup>3</sup>
Washington, DC—DC.	District of Columbia. <sup>1</sup>
Washington, DC—MD.	Montgomery County and Prince Georges County. <sup>1</sup>
Washington, DC—VA.	Arlington County, Fairfax County, Prince William County, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, City of Manassas, and City of Manassas Park. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For selected items, such as golf, snow skiing, and air travel, these survey areas may include additional geographic locations beyond these jurisdictions.

<sup>2</sup> OPM may collect housing data in other areas in Puerto Rico that have a significant concentration of Federal employees stationed in those areas.

<sup>3</sup> OPM collects housing data in St. John. OPM also may collect non-housing data from selected outlets in St. John.

(b) *Rest of the State of Alaska COLA area.* OPM may collect survey data on-site, use alternative indicators of rel-

ative living costs (e.g., price and cost information published by the University of Alaska), or both. If the use of alternative indicators would result in a COLA rate reduction, OPM will conduct onsite surveys in one or more locations in the Rest of the State of Alaska COLA area, before making a reduction, to ensure that the reduction is warranted.

(c) *Determining Survey Coverage.* To aid OPM in determining survey coverage, OPM may from time to time conduct surveys of Federal employees in the COLA areas and/or the Washington, DC, area to determine where employees shop and what they spend on certain goods or services and to collect other information related to the price surveys and the calculation of price indexes.

[67 FR 22340, May 3, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 59762, Oct. 6, 2004]

### §591.216 How does OPM combine survey data for the DC area and for COLA areas with multiple survey areas?

(a) *Washington, DC, area.* For each survey item except shelter, OPM averages separately the prices collected in each of the DC survey areas identified in §591.215(a) and then averages these average prices together using equal weights to compute an overall average by item for the DC area.

(b) *COLA areas with multiple survey areas.* OPM computes weighted average indexes at the item, PEG, MEG, and/or overall level by using the corresponding indexes and Federal employment weights from each survey area within the COLA area.

[67 FR 22340, May 3, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 59763, Oct. 6, 2004]

### §591.217 In which outlets does OPM collect prices?

OPM collects prices in popular outlets in each survey area. OPM selects these outlets based on their proximity to the housing data collection areas, accessibility by road, physical size, advertising, and other characteristics that reflect sales volume. To the extent practical, OPM prices like items in the same types of outlets in the COLA areas and the Washington, DC,